1/24/72

Mr. Henry Wade
District Attorney
Dallas, Texas

Dear Henry,

It is not bad manners but an accumulation of things that had to be taken care of promptly on my getting home, then a succession of "working company" beginning Xmas and continuing until a day ago, combined with an accident, that are responsible for this delay in thanking you for your kindnesses when I was in Dallas.

We are, I think, different kinds of outdoorsmen. I never hunt; you love it. I just walk on the mountain and work around our five acres of trees and such. This is what led to my almost chopping off my left thumb with a machette, trimming out a long-needled white pine near the house after a storm took it down. I still have to keep that thumb straight, which slows me down on some things, like making packages (I haven't forgotten/I'm going to send you the books I published myself, the only ones I have). It is still splinted for this purpose, but otherwise it is no real trouble, not in the sense of pain. As a matter of fact, as I've thought about this, I've come to understand more about the first tragedy of Dallas. I don't know how this happened, and I was looking, and a man with me saw it and can't tell me how it happened. When you read my first book, you will see that I said that eye-wtinesses are often the least dependable sources of information not because they are dishonest but because things happen too fast for them to comprehend. Prosecutors usually have to depend more on eye-witnesses. And while I reacted pretty promptly, I do not know how mong my reaction was delayed, another factor in the assassination. More, it is not pain, which I didn't feel despite how close I came to chopping the tumb off, that told me what I had done. To this day I have never had any real pain. So I have learned that a wound inflicted by surprise and with great swiftness can block the reaction of the nerves. In my case, I suppose it was because they were cut that fast.

You increased my understanding of Ruby very much. I always felt that he was sick, but until the things you told me and let me see, I didn't realize how sick in the head he really was. I am sure these things were not secret from the Washington boys, so again I wonder why they didn't tell these things, and in those cases where the truth could not be printed, at least have an appraisal. You Texas people may think I ma putting you on when I say that Washington had you all, but it has always, from the time I began to ransack those suppressed files, been my belief. With everything I learn this feeling becomes more certain. That, not Ruby, was my larger interest this trip, but the new insight into Ruby addresses that, too. Hence my interest in several of the things I laid aside and asked for copies on your return. I remember two, your (and I think historically very important) memo on your July interview with Ruby, the one with the steno's notes attached to the original of the typed copy, and Alexander's detailed memo having to do with the polygraph. I would like these very much. If there are any reservations you would apply, please write or type them on the copies. I do and can keep secrets if it is necessary. With both of these, if you would prefer that they not be quoted, when I use them, if I do, I would not quote them. But I would like to be able to use the information they contain. With regard to the Alexander memo, if you can find time I'd like your expert opinion on whether it was legally proper for Specter to insist that the prosecution be present - not for quotation but for my understanding. Specter remains an enigma to me, and I think I know more about him and what he did and how there is no excusing it than anyone. Why he was this way is what baffles me.

Specter is not alone in this. All those lawyers knew better. Only a few would not be part of it. One quit almost immediately and others not too long thereafter. I am not really satisfied with the explanation that the average American lawyer is not prepared to fill more than one role in an adversary proceeding. When I was a young man I was part of a Senate investigation. We had little trouble seeing both sides. More recently, with a friend who is a pretty good amateur ballistics expert, I was able to prove what the FBI didn't prove about those shells found at the TSBD, how the dents got in them. Or didn't you know that the FBI left this entirely unexplained and that the Commission asked no questions about it? But most of my recent work has been in Specter's area, therefore he is of more interest to me. I also found that some of your local people who dealt with him developed an intense personal dislike for him. I do not know why.

One or two of the things I set aside you may not be able to let me have and I wanted only for souvenir value, like his card with Jada. One of the things that interested me about Ruby I found clues to but not definitive answers. Perhaps this is because there was time for skimming those large files only. I have never agreed with those who postulated Ruby was sort of high up in gangland. But I have never seen any accounting of his finances. When I considered how much he owed in taxes I was satisfied that he had nothing. Seeing those American Express check stubs in your files convinced me of this. This is one of the reasons I wanted Mrs. Mary Ferrell (who knows more about Ruby, by the way, than I do) to be able to go over your file and Dean Storey's for me. Mary is a legal secretary and knows how to regard in confidence what must be regarded as confidential. There is an advantage in her doing this at leisure when she has the time for you. I hope the time will come when you make your part clear for history, if for no other reason. She will then be one who can help you most, and knowing what is in your files can be quite helpful. I think you will find that she has much knowledge of Ruby you do not have. Unless somebody has cleaned your files out, you got virtually none of the FBI reports on him. Mary either now has of knows who does have everything on him that has not been suppressed. I know the others, but I don't know what she has simply because Ruby has not been one of my larger interests. My chief interest has been in the Washington end of the investigation which can hardly be called that despite its size, because the right things never were investigated.

I hope sometime we can sit down for an evening and talk about this. I think it may mean much to your understanding. I don't know when I can be in Dallas again. The propaganda in which Connally had such a large part, that this kind of work is profitable, is false. I am broke from it, so I can travel little. But to put it in its simplest form, all the irrelevancies were explored in great depth and the Commission's lawyers were flooded with this kind of junk, more so when they asked the Bureau the right questions, which once in a while they did. The got the idea soon enough.

I saw nothing in your files that bears on what interested me more immediately, your emergency trip to Washington. When you have time, I do hope you will make notes of all you can remember about it, no matter how slight and seemingly unimportant the detail. The Washington problem was working around what you knew and then hiding what they could not misrepresent. I did learn more about this, but not from you and Dean Storey. If my proof is not overwhelming, I am without doubt of the fact. And I would like to be able to make the most complete and accurate record possible. If you ever come here, I can show you what I mean. This is one of the areas in which records were, literally, destroyed, and I will show you the proof of the destruction and what remains. I have both. I have to ask myself why, and I am satisfied with the answer I have arrived at. This may be the key to the whole thing. If I am right then the Washington effort to pin so much on Dallas will be clearer. It will have a comprehensible purpose. Among the things I learned on this trip is what the Dallas FBI learned and did not give the Commission on this. I have gotten, I think, to the root of what Alexander was originally involved in. I did not have time to follow your suggestion that I look him up. But when you see him, if he has any records he made I'd appreciate having them, or any memo he would care to let me have. This is something about which I will be writing and I am satisfied that he is innocent in it. But I also think he may know fact the significance of which he does not know. He may know more. I have no way of

knowing. But on two points I am satisfied: that report did not originate with Allan Sweatt and it did not originate in Dallas.

One of the things that has taken much of my time lately is the absolutely insane thing that phoney liberal Burke Marshall has done in the Kennedy name, permit an unqualified man, a urologist, of all things, exclusive access to the material put away under a GSA-Kennedy family contract. First of all, this is a clear violation of that contract (which I happen to think is illegal). Next, it proves that the Archivist of the United States committed perjury, and as I ask myself questions, I have to wonder what could impel him to open criminality. The certainty that he would ne be prosecuted is not enough answer for me. I filed suit (unfortunately having to be my own lawyer when I am not a lawyer) under 5 U.S.C. 552 for access to some of what is covered by that contract, in this case also official exhibits of the Commission. The Archivist swore that under the contract he was not permitted to let anyone see these exhibits, the President's clothing, and then he turns around and lets this urologist see it. What makes this all the more incredible is that this doctor has done no more research than squeeze and shave bullets. He really knows nothing about the fact and has a political ax to grind. I have his little writing and it is crazy and political. I knew what was up in advance and was ready to study it when it happened. How phoney it is I think you can understand when I tell you what your papers may or may not have reported, that this phoney actually said and was without question quoted as saying that the pictures and X-rays prove <u>who</u> fired the shots. That is black magic, not evidence or science.

I tell you these things not to bother you with a long letter but because I think in the long run your understanding of what you have no way of knowing will be important. This was a major event in our history, I think a turning point in it. And believe me, as I can prove to you, one of Rankin's major preoccupations was keeping their information away from you people and from Belli. He terrified the members of the Commission, for example, about what they should have been able to see through, the likelihood that if they went to Dallas when they should have Belli would have subpenaed. This is not in their published material, nor is it in their files. It was originally classified "Top Secret", and I have it now.

Because I am writing this while doing other things, I ramble more than usual. On Lattimer, the doctor Marshall let have exclusive access to the suppressed evidence, what he says is impossible for reasons other than that it doesn't make sense. His representation of the wounds he mentioned (naturally, not including the cause of death!) is also impossible from irrefutable evidence I have and have had in the draft of a book for some time. Which makes me wonder more about that entire operation when there was neither the need nor the legal obligation to let anybody see that stuff now and there has never been less interest in the subject and virtually no demand for access. At best it is contrary to Teddy's interest and at worst it has the potential of ruining the Kennedy name, more so if Marshall now lets a real expert see the stuff and he comes out and says it disproves the Warren Report. This has been carefully rigged in advance so that it will then be alleged and uncritically reported that the Kennedys were responsible for all the suppressions.

Let me return again to something I mentioned to you, which has two parts. One is the prejudicial nature of all of Dallas that was built into the official work, including you. As I told you, I am confident - and sorry - that at the beginning I also was taken in by it and while I have no recollection of how I represented it in my earlier writing, I feel it must be there and at least in some degree in unfair form. There was an immediate Washington involvement in Dallas, and Washington had experience with what you people did not. One simple example of this is the pooling of reporters. They do it all the time. You never had the need down there. They did it, for example, when AF1 left to return to Washington, when they had but three reporters to represent all. Had this been done, and it should have been, all that ensued would have been different. You would not have had the problem of all that irresponsible airing of what should not have been aired, and you would not have felt compelled to try and

straightened the record out when your only source was those who were making the mistakes. In retrospect, I feel I should have understood this better long ago, but I didn't. I think I was blinded by what was subsequently affirmed by the Supreme Court in Sheppard, that all of that publicity prevented the possibility of trying Oswald. So, if there is no rush on it, I hope you will consider writing a piece for something like the ABA Journal on the special problems of the DA when the most spectacular crimes are committed. If you do, I also hope you would let me circulate it for criticism among some of the responsible ones of maturity who have done research, for it would do little good to do an article that would only stir up more controversy without settling anything. I wish I could feel that such crimes will wane. If there is not a great likelihood of many others of that magnitude, I think serious violence is going to increase, and that just as the accused is entitled to a fair trial, so also do I think that society and its institutions must function properly. When the guilty go free because of technical errors, only the guilty benefit. But without the protections of the law, which should apply equally to all, nobody can ever be certain of not being found guilty when he is innocent.

Also in retrospect, I find that there is more of what some of those on "my side" who do not always agree with me will consider a defense of Dallas in what I have written but have not been able to get printed than I had recalled. Actually, this begins with my first book, which is critical of the kidnapping of the President's corpse. ~~Until~~ On rereading what I had written so my wife could type it I remembered that one of the first criticisms of my first book was because of its insistence that the laws, rights and obligations of Dallas and Texas should have been respected, and that if they had been much of the needless ensuing tragedy mightwell have been avoided. Of all people, this criticism was by a judge! A New Yorker who apparently feels law should be respected selectively. But I tell you tha from my study of the Oswald autopsy, had Rose done that on JFK the present scandalous situation would not exist.

Mary Ferrell has not bee able to get in touch with you. She is a full-time legal secretary, was just getting sick when I left, got viral pneumonia, and when she recovered enough did what any proud grandmother would do, flew to Europe to see the new-born. She has just returned. I'm sure that what stacked up in her office during this absence will occupy her for a while. But I am looking forward to her being able to go over those files with care, making notes which, of course, will be available to you for anything you might in the future want to do, and possibly increasing everybody's understanding.

So, apologies for this length, thanks for everything, and I'll soon send the books. OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS is out of print. If you wan it and can xerox a copy, I can lend you one or Mary will lend you hers. My book on the King assassination was published commercially and promptly assassinated. I can buy a copy for you at less than you'd have to pay for it there, if it is still on sale. Aldredge's had a copy when I was there. And I hope you can let me have copies of those things I set aside in skimming the files.

Best regards and thanks,

Harold Weisberg